Pol 14 Viet S (1425)

Department of State TELEGRAM

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ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00

NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-13 UPW-01

AID-28 RSR-01 /130 W

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R 061137Z JAN 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9752
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Sgamboy DATE 1/22/82
NDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON (3)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 0195

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARAS 2. AND 3.)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LAW

REF: SAIGON 19912 / Pol 14 Viet S.

1. THE LOWER HOUSE JAN 6 PASSED THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LAW AFTER FOUR DAYS OF DEBATE AND THE BILL NOW GOES TO THE SENATE.

2. THE DRAFT LAWS ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED TO THE INTERIOR COMMITTEE CONTAINED PROVISIONS DESIGNED TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILMENT TO RUN, MEASURES OBVIOUSLY DESIGNED TO DISCOURAGE SOME OF THE LEADING CONTENDERS AND THUS HELP INCUMBENTS. IN THE BILL AS REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE THIS PROVISION WAS DROPPED, AND AN EFFORT ON THE FLOOR TO PUT IT BACK IN WAS DEFEATED BY A WIDE MARGIN.

3. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THIS PROVISION WAS REMOVED IN COMMITTEE AT THE REQUEST OF THE EXECUTIVE, PRESUMABLY

(1)

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BECAUSE IT CONFLICTED WITH PRESIDENT THIEU'S DESIRE TO SUPPORT A NUMBER OF COUNCILORS IN THE LOWER HOUSE ELECTION NOW SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 29 WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THEY WOULD THEN CAMPAIGN FOR THIEU FOR PRESIDENT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OCTOBER 3.

4. THE LOWER HOUSE DEBATE CENTERED AROUND THE QUESTION OF HOW TO DISTRIBUTE SEATS EQUITABLY TO MONTAGNARDS, CHAMS AND CAMBODIANS; AND WHAT CATEGORIES OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND OFFICERS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RUN IN THE PROVINCE WHERE THEY ARE SERVING BECAUSE THEIR POSITION (PROVINCE CHIEF, POLICE CHIEF, BATTALION COMMANDER, ETC.) WOULD GIVE THEM AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE. IN THE END THE SEATS FOR MINORITIES REMAINED AS ESTABLISHED IN THE 1967 LAW, AND THE CATEGORIES OF MILITARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL INELIGIBLE TO RUN, SUCH AS THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE, ALSO WERE LITTLE CHANGED FROM 1967.

5. THE POINTS RAISED IN DEBATE ARE NOT OF MAJOR POLITICAL IMPORTANCE, AND SO FAR THE BILL REMAINS NON-CONTROVERSIAL.
BUNKER

ORIGIN/ACTION

WHR	REP	AF
RA	EUR	FE
EA	CU	INR 6
E	P	IO
		AID
	S/S 10	VTC 1
GR	COM	FRB
INT	LAB	TAR
TR	XMB	AIR 5
RMY 3	CIA 16	NAVY 5
SD 34	USIA 10	NSA 3
CIA 2	NSC 6	

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

INFO : BANGKOK, CINCPAC, DANANG, USDEL FRANCE, VIENTIANE, CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FROM : Amembassy SAIGON

DATE: February 4, 1971

SUBJECT : The Vietnamese Presidential Election: The Current Outlook

REF :

1. SUMMARY: It now appears the October 3 Vietnamese Presidential election will be a two-man contest pitting General Minh against President Thieu, although there remains some possibility Vice President Ky may also enter the race but with little chance to win. Thieu as the incumbent is in the most advantageous position. He is engaged in steady activity to improve his electoral chances, and seems to be successfully forging a coalition of support. Minh, however, is a formidable challenger. Despite a reputation for lack of ability, he is widely popular and is a suitable front man for the various opposition elements. He also has the important issues of war weariness, corruption, and inflation to exploit. The shape of the campaign has yet to gel, and the course of events and the organizational skill of the contestants may change the prospects greatly. So far the chances for a moderate and non-divisive campaign seem good, but events can go awry. END SUMMARY.

2. The Election Comes into Focus: The major subject of political discussion in Viet-Nam is now the presidential election, which will take place October 3. President Nguyen Van Thieu, General Duong Van (Big) Minh and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky are conceded to be the only three serious candidates. The number of candidates in this election (there were 11 in the 1967 election) may in any event be restricted by the electoral law. The Lower House at private Executive urging passed a bill providing that presidential candidates must be nominated by 40 senators and deputies or 100 provincial councilmen, limiting the candidates theoretically to nine but in practice probably to two or three. There is varying sentiment in the Upper House, which will consider the bill in February, both for further tightening the restriction or for eliminating or loosening it. Although it is not yet a major issue, opposition elements and press have labeled the electoral bill as unconstitutional and an attempt by Thieu unjustly to restrict opposition.

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